

S

Preston Rural District Council.

Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the Year
ended 31st December, 1943.

To the Chairman and Members of the Preston Rural District Council.

GENTLEMEN,

I have pleasure in presenting to you the report of the health of the Rural District for the year 1943. As in previous years the report, in accordance with the instructions of the Ministry of Health, is in summary form only.

It is not permissible to refer in any detail to statistical matters, but complete records are held in the Department so that after cessation of hostilities a report can be presented dealing more fully with the health of the District during the war years.

It will be appreciated that the report includes a period during which Dr. C. J. Trimble was in office. As I was able to assist Dr. Trimble during this time, I am familiar with the various health matters which arose.

It is unnecessary for me to draw attention to the many services rendered to the Preston Rural District by my esteemed and distinguished predecessor; they are well known. His keen foresight and wise counsel are held in high regard by all. I would, however, like to record the never failing help and kindness which I personally have received from Dr. Trimble, help which greatly facilitated the transfer of duties.

Vital Statistics.

Statistical tables cannot, for reasons of national security, be included in this report, but the following is a general statement with reference to births and deaths. The birth rate continues to show an upward tendency; 617 births occurred during 1943. This was an increase of 35 births over the figure for 1942. 411 deaths were registered, a decrease of 12 deaths on the previous year.

The number of infant deaths under one year remains the same as in the preceeding year and amounted to 27.

Matters arising from or connected with the war.

Government Evacuation Scheme.—No special developments or changes took place during the year. The hostel for evacuees at Penwortham House continues in operation. Periodic visits are made by your Medical Officer for the purpose of supervising health arrangements and special visits are paid at the Matron's request as and when required. During the year an outbreak of tonsillitis necessitated the taking of special action, and several children were removed to a sick-bay for isolation. Close co-operation exists with the County Council in medical matters appertaining to evacuation.

Infectious Diseases.

No serious outbreak of disease was experienced during the year. The following table shows the number of notifications received in the department. The figures for 1942 are given in parenthesis :—

Scarlet Fever	...	156	(71)
Whooping Cough	...	36	(43)
Diphtheria	...	37	(23)
Erysipelas	...	6	(8)
Measles	...	229	(294)
Pneumonia	...	37	(29)
Puerperal Pyrexia	...	3	(1)

The incidence of Scarlet Fever was more than double that of the preceding year. The disease assumed epidemic proportions during the autumn months when it was prevalent throughout the country as a whole. The disease was mild in type and no serious administrative problems were raised.

School closure was resorted to at Broughton where the exclusion of individual children failed to limit the spread of the disease. The spread was undoubtedly due in large measure to the mildness of the symptoms which many parents failed to associate with Scarlet Fever.

A sharp localised outbreak occurred at the Hutton Grammar School at the end of January. Six boys were affected. The outbreak was, with one exception, limited to scholars boarding at the school, and for this reason school closure was put into operation.

It is generally recognised that "Scarlet Fever" has become so benign that removal to hospital is not usually indicated or to be desired. Cross infection, the cause of many of the complications of scarlet fever, is eliminated if the patient is nursed at home.

Hospital treatment should be reserved for severe cases requiring skilled nursing, and those cases occurring in a household a member of which is a food handler or a woman approaching confinement.

Diphtheria. The number of cases of diphtheria notified was considerably in excess of the previous year. The disease in many instances was of a severe type and demonstrates the need for further efforts to secure the immunisation against diphtheria of all children in the district, and in particular those under the age of five.

Diphtheria Immunisation. The Council's scheme, which was fully described in the Annual Report for 1941, continues in operation. The table given below shows the number of children who have been immunised since the scheme was instituted :—

Immunisation of Children against Diphtheria.

	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	
Under 1 year ...	1	..	10	4	3	Total under 5 years at end of 1943 884
1 year ...		2	155	126	171	
2 years ...	2	1	135	60	55	
3 years ...	...	2	175	59	42
4 years ...	3	7	191	47	61	
5 years ...	2	4	266	53	48	Total between 5 and 9 years 1582
6 years ...	3	10	278	44	54	
7 years ...	2	6	255	33	24	
8 years ...	2	5	251	19	31	
9 years ...	1	5	248	21	33	
10 years ...	4	5	248	16	18	Total between 10 and 14 years 3876
11 years ...	...	4	217	17	23
12 years ...	...	2	240	19	16
13 years ...	.	1	190	15	8
14 years .	...	...	42	3	3
15 years and over	36	...	3	Total over 15 years at end of 1942=277
	20	54	2937	536	593	4140

Scabies. There was a marked decline in the number of cases of Scabies coming to the notice of the Health Department. This was probably accounted for by the decrease in the number of evacuees. Facilities for treatment have been made available by the Lancashire County Council, and are made use of where necessary.

Lancashire County Nursing Association. No change has taken place during 1943 as regards the nursing facilities provided by the County Association for the District. Fifteen nurses serve the several townships of the Rural Area, and the cases attended during the year were as follows:—Midwifery 47, Maternity 66, Tuberculosis 1, and General 1,237. The total visits made were 2,501.

Pathological Examinations. The following examinations were carried out for the Preston Rural District at the Department of Pathology at the Preston Royal Infirmary: Blood 3; Fæces 17; Milk for B. Tuberculosis 90; B. Coli content 104; others 91; Sputum 14; Swabs—B. Diphtheria 103; Hæmolytic Streptococci 52; others 9; Urine culture, pathogenic organisms 2; Water-full bacteriological examination 1. Total 486 examinations.

Measures for (Maternity and Child Welfare). The County Council are responsible for the provision and administration of the Maternity and Child Welfare Services in the District. The Child Welfare Centres established at Catforth and Penwortham continue to be well attended.

The County Council have made arrangements with Preston Royal Infirmary and the Sharoe Green Hospital, Fulwood, for the admission of maternity cases where home surroundings are unsuitable for the confinement to take place there, or where hospital treatment is necessary for medical or surgical reasons. The demand for hospital accommodation for normal maternity cases is steadily increasing. No doubt war-time conditions account to a large extent for the preference for hospital care.

School Medical Inspections and Treatment. The school medical services are administered by the Lancashire County Council. A scheme is in force for the provision of milk for necessitous school children, and approximately 500 pints of milk were supplied during the year to children in the Rural District.

Sanitary Circumstances. The normal sanitary work in the Rural District has been well maintained. It is not possible to include full details of the work in this report, but Mr. Collier has preserved all records so that, if necessary, he may at a later date present a full Report dealing with the war period. Brief references are made below to a few of the year's activities.

Housing. The structural condition of the houses in the Rural Area is generally good. During the year four new houses were erected, two in Farington and two in Penwortham.

The Third Report of the Rural Housing Sub-Committee of the Central Housing Advisory Committee has recently been published, and the many recommendations contained therein merit the close attention of the Rural District Council, particularly in relation to changes caused by the war and the policy to be pursued after the war. The report advocates, *inter alia*, the setting up of a voluntary Joint Committee, representative of all the Rural District Councils in the County, and the County Council, and including any other persons representative of bodies interested in housing whom the Committee thinks fit to co-opt.

Inspections. Premises visited 2,175; No. of nuisances discovered 608; Nuisances abated 592; Notices served—informal 100; Statutory 12.

Water Supply. Water supplies are obtained from four sources: Preston Corporation, Manchester Corporation, Fylde Water Board and Fulwood Urban District Council. The quantity and quality continued quite satisfactory.

Sewerage. Outfall works exist in five Parishes; elsewhere a septic tank is provided for each house.

Supervision and Protection of Food Supply.

Milk and Dairies. (1) There are 670 dairy farms in the District, on which approximately 12,000 cows are kept. Periodical visits are made and the inspections during 1943 numbered 722.

The number of dairymen other than cowkeepers in the District is 119.

Samples of milk submitted for the biological test for Tuberculosis numbered 173. Of these 3 were positive and 170 negative.

Bacteriological examinations were carried out in 113 instances—73 proved satisfactory and 40 unsatisfactory.

225 Sediment tests were performed; 155 were satisfactory and 70 unsatisfactory. Of the unsatisfactory samples 26 were only very slightly contaminated, 30 slightly contaminated and 14 were classed as "dirty."

Food and Drugs Acts. (11). 70 Samples of milk produced in the Rural District were taken by Inspectors of the County Council for analysis, seven samples were reported to be unsatisfactory, and of these, three were slightly deficient in fats and four slightly deficient in non-fatty solids.

9 samples of other food stuffs were reported as genuine.

Shops Acts. For the purpose of the Public Health Act, 1936, 37 inspections were made with regard to ventilation and sanitary conveniences in shops. Conditions were found to be satisfactory in all instances.

Factories Act, 1937. 38 inspections were carried out under this Act, and in all cases conditions were found to be satisfactory.

Cleansing. Seventeen Parishes are scavenged by the Council's own direct labour, but owing to the shortage of men, all the parishes have been put on a fortnightly collection of dry refuse. Disposal of refuse is by means of controlled tipping.

Salvage. Over 375 tons of various materials have been salvaged, the cash value of which exceeded £1,696.

Parks, Playing Fields and Open Spaces. Maintenance of the places has been reduced to a minimum, and considerable areas have been let off for either grazing or ploughing.

Town Planning. The activities of this department have been greatly curtailed by reason of the war.

The Rural District is situate within the area of two Regional Joint Town Planning Committees, the Parishes of Ribchester, Hothersall and Dutton being in the area of the N.E. (Region No. 1) Joint Town Planning Committee, and the remainder of the Rural District in that of Preston and District Regional Joint Town Planning Committee.

Interim Development Order, 1933. 65 applications to develop were considered during 1943 with the following results :—

Permission granted	...	...	...	33
Permission granted subject to conditions	...	...	...	29
Refused	...	...	...	2
Consideration deferred	...	...	...	1

In conclusion, it is a privilege to express to the Chairman and Members of the Health Committee my appreciation of the encouragement and kindness shown to me since I took over the duties of Medical Officer to the Preston Rural District.

My warm thanks are due to my colleagues for their ready help and co-operation during the year.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

S. C. GAWNE,

Medical Officer of Health.

July, 1944.